

Mayor Donnalee Lozeau
State of the City
February 17, 2015

Thank you, President Deane and good evening to you and members of the Board of Aldermen. As you know, this is my eighth and final State of the City address. Each year as I prepare for this opportunity I reflect back on the previous year's accomplishments and look forward to what can and will be accomplished in the coming year.

As I look back I am once again struck by our community. I have said it before; Nashua is indeed a wonderful place, full of concerned and engaged citizens and families, innovative and daring business owners, and a reliable and passionate workforce. This job of governing that you and I do is completely dependent on the goodwill and engagement of those affected by our acts.

At my inaugural in 2008 and again in ending my first State of the City address I said something that I want to repeat now, at the beginning of this, my last State of the City. "Good government should not be a spectator sport. It is a shared responsibility and requires the participation of all citizens. Everyone should be involved, committed to offering solutions and sharing experience and expertise for everyone's benefit." I believed it then, I have experienced it in exceptional degrees over the last seven years and I look forward to embracing and encouraging the idea through the end of 2015.

Over the last seven years, with the cooperation and hard work of those willing to step up and take part in the process we have accomplished some amazing things.

Let me begin with looking at our infrastructure.

I am sure no one would doubt the fact that Nashua now owns and is in control of our local water supply, will stand out as a prime example of what can be done through creative thinking, hard work and determination. Years of weekly meetings, tough negotiations, and legislative deliberations have secured Nashua's water supply for generations to come.

Citizens have stepped up to the task of overseeing this government owned corporation, steering it in the best interest of solely its users instead of its stockholders as was the case before.

In 2005 a modified agreement was signed with the EPA relative to 110 miles of sewer separation that before the agreement was in place, was expected to cost \$250 million. As recently as 2009 we were able to again modify the agreement and capture significant efficiencies and reduce costs. Since 2009 \$70 million in work has been completed.

- The 60 million gallon wet weather treatment facility is operational.
- System optimizations have been completed on all of our Combined System Overflow structures (also known as CSOs),

- Harbor Ave and Haines St have been separated,
- Many miles of pipe have been lined, and storage areas have been added.
- The net metering program expanded its capacity which provides for more electricity generation.

This is a small sample of what has been done, more later on what's to come.

Steady headway has been achieved in our transportation system. From [safer sidewalks](#) and expanded trails for pedestrians and [cyclists](#) to [public transportation](#), [roadways](#), [waterways](#), [runways](#) and even [rail](#)! We are working on making Nashua an easily accessed destination with resources in place to make navigating and enjoying all that our city has to offer our residents and visitors...easier than ever.

Nashua opened the first Compressed Natural Gas fueling station in the state. Not only is it beneficial for our fleet of CNG vehicles but for that of the public. We have regular business customers, and we are open for business for private citizens. And for those that prefer electric, we just recently installed an Electric Car fueling station at the Elm St. Garage!

Our transit ridership has increased steadily reaching 500 thousand this past year. We have added the first CNG fueled bus to our fleet. The transit department continues to find ways to serve our citizens and improve their quality of life.

The summer of 2014 was the first year that together with Public Health, Transit launched a successful Summer Recreation Route focused on providing transportation for the youth of Nashua to get to summer recreational programs that they may otherwise not have been able to participate in. Over the holidays, the Holidays Circulator Route was created to eliminate long waits along the Daniel Webster Highway.

I want to welcome and thank, Chris Clow, the new Transportation Manager, who has been baptized by snow. He comes to us from North Carolina, joining us just before the November Nor'easter and so far.... has kept a smile on his face.

In the past two years we have spent a great deal of time discussing our traffic lights. Nashua has 89 controlled intersections. Many of them have an impact on the signal before or after them. [Thanks to a \\$2 million grant through the federal congestion mitigation air quality grant program also referred to as CMAQ, we have developed synchronized traffic signals to ease wait times and mitigate pollution.](#)

Though there is still work that needs to be done on that, already improvements have been achieved. The technology is here. As traffic patterns change, we will have the ability to readily adjust the signals to accommodate those changes. It was a difficult project and tough to get done. With the help of many of you providing information on the intersections as they came on line, we are finally seeing great improvements.

Since 2008 we have diligently invested in our buildings, another of our important assets. Long necessary maintenance, restorations and upgrades have been completed.

With [17 schools in the city](#), investments in those facilities are on-going. Since 2008 some of those investments include, Broad St., Ledge St., Charlotte Ave. and Fairgrounds elementary schools, along with Elm St. Middle School and citywide, a new school security system. Not to mention new turf at Stellos Stadium! Thanks to the 2011 Leadership Greater Nashua class the Keefe Auditorium saw much needed renovations.

From energy efficiencies to roof replacements, carpets to ceilings we have completed work on projects at Police and Fire, City Hall, the Elm and High Street parking garages and our iconic Hunt Memorial Building.

The Hunt Memorial Building Board of Trustees worked closely with the city to support that significant undertaking. At the same time they created a plan that included creating office space that could be rented out to move toward greater self-sufficiency. I want to thank them once again for their service.

While I am mentioning the Hunt Memorial Building Board of Trustees I want to recognize and thank two trustees in particular. Joy Barrett, a 15 year member of the Board, was there through the entire renovation project, and served as chairman of the Board. Joy recently ended her term and service on the Board of Trustees.

It is hard to mention the Hunt Memorial Building without mentioning Frank Mellen. Sadly, Frank passed away recently. He was a long serving board member whose quiet, unassuming manner got things done on many boards. When I say government is not a spectator sport, I am speaking of team players like Joy Barrett and Frank Mellen.

I wish to thank other team players, Jack Tulley and the rest of the members of the Nashua Business Industrial Development Authority for their efforts over the past eight years to orchestrate the transformation of the [Bridge Street properties](#).

[Located strategically along the Nashua and Merrimack Rivers, the potential of these properties](#) has been stymied for years by the perception of environmental contamination. BIDA has worked tirelessly and consistently with the City to take the vital steps necessary to turn these liabilities into future assets for Nashua and its economy.

[BIDA championed a zoning change in 2007 to allow mixed-use development on this site](#). They initiated environmental testing to help erase concerns that the development community held. [They attracted a private-sector partner to work with the City and BIDA to develop a clear vision for the site as one that could help connect people to the riverfront with trails, housing, retail and a riverfront restaurant](#).

Most impressively, BIDA persistently advocated that future economic development potential be considered as the City planned to build Waste Water's CSO Screening and Disinfection Facility. BIDA's efforts opened the City's eyes to a redesign that ultimately placed the facility underground and out of sight, preserving the Bridge Street site for future, impactful development. This redesigned facility, now 95% completed, resulted in a project savings of over \$4 million.

While we still look forward to breaking ground on an exciting new development for Nashua, we must not forget the work of Chairman Jack Tulley and his fellow members on BIDA who have helped lay the foundation for the future. Thanks also go out to the former Vice Chair Don Zizzi, whose thoughts, vision and enthusiasm will be missed on that board as he pursues his new adventure working with Harvard University!

I cannot talk about our infrastructure without talking about our [downtown sidewalk work](#). While many believe this to be a project about appearance, it is actually a significant infrastructure project. More than 20 meetings, over a thousand returned surveys, and public information meetings, culminated in a report with a plan presented to you in November 2010.

This project began in earnest in April of 2012, with the rebuilding of the sidewalks on the Main Street bridge, each spring our crews get out there and work in difficult conditions through the outdoor construction season, this typically gives them a mere 6 month window not counting the days we lose to Mother Nature. We are hopeful the work will be completed by the end of the 2015 season.

This major infrastructure project includes drainage, electrical and conduit work; rebuilt storm drains, curbing, street lights and even work done to increase the width of sidewalks where feasible. The newly designed mid-block crossings afford refuge to pedestrians in the center, and soon to come new signs and lights will add yet another measure of safety.

In less than 18 months an extraordinary amount of work has been completed in very challenging conditions. All the while, work continues on other sidewalks city wide including completion of some existing sidewalks, along with needed maintenance, and in a few instances new sidewalks that were critical to safety, like Cushing Avenue.

I cannot possibly detail all of the infrastructure projects achieved in the time I have this evening, but I will quickly list some additional notables:

- the new equipment for our citywide radio communications;
- the new CERF plan that now includes all city vehicles, with a funding plan to stay on track;
- new energy efficient lighting in the police and fire stations;
- the new approach to gas collection and net metering at the landfill, welcoming a brand new company and partner in this endeavor PPL;
- work on our rivers and millpond, including new boat launches for motorized and non-motorized uses.

I could continue... but you get the idea, we have done so much together on a variety of infrastructure which will serve our citizens today and well into the future.

We have worked to streamline government and make it more efficient and user friendly. We took down the silos of government divisions and built an environment where everyone speaks to each other and in the same language; we re-shaped job descriptions to better utilize and maximize personnel resources; provided means for residents to report issues and request service from the Division of Public Works with online reporting and tracking; and we have on-line bill paying and credit card use.

Speaking of on-line, we are! With Facebook and Twitter, [Emergency Management](#), [Public Health](#), and [Economic Development](#) getting up to the minute information out is now routine. All our monthly and annual financials are on line for easy access. All contracts, both [union contracts](#) and vendor contracts are now easily accessed on line as well as our [budgets](#) and [Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports](#). There is no denying that Nashua's books are open and easily accessible. [We are pleased to be a Sunny Award recipient.](#)

We can certainly be proud of Nashua's excellent financial shape.

The bond rating companies continue to recognize Nashua's strong financial management. [Standard & Poor's double A plus \(AA+\) rating](#) and [Fitch's triple A \(AAA\) rating](#) of Nashua's bonds reflect on our commitment to fiscal responsibility all while keeping the tax rate stable and continuing to provide excellent service to our taxpayers.

We have been able to issue bonds at below 3% interest for 4 consecutive years. The rating agencies consistently cite Nashua's strong financial management, diverse and expanding economic base, low debt levels, strong economy and very strong budgetary performance. The City has refunded bonds and refinanced State loans for a savings of \$4.5 million and \$2.2 million, respectively.

It is a successful strategy and we are once again looking to refinance some older bonds during Fiscal Year 15 in order to achieve further savings on interest costs. Thanks to CFO John Griffin and City Treasurer David Fredette who are always actively engaged in seeking out and implementing cost saving measures.

Through fair and consistent union negotiations we have been able to keep the city's health care benefit costs stable. Currently, all employees are sharing the cost with a higher rate of premiums and increased co-pays and added deductibles. The introduction of a high-deductible plan with a companion Health Savings Account has been well received by employees with over 100 employees selecting this plan. There were no increases in Health Care premiums in Fiscal Year 15 and we are planning no increase.... perhaps even a reduction in our premium rates for Fiscal Year 16. All these combined have allowed us to keep the health insurance appropriation flat at approximately \$26 million since Fiscal Year 2009.

Presently there are two collective bargaining agreements before the Board of Aldermen and I encourage approval of both. The overall wage increases for each of these agreements are below many of the wage increases already approved for other unions. Should those pass, we will have a window when none of the 16 collective bargaining agreements will be expired! Seven agreements will expire this summer though – three school unions, fire, library and two police unions, supervisors and UAW.

We will continue to be mindful of the terms of any new agreements. Those items related to wages, must recognize that the CPI increases have been modest and that any wage increases will also impact the city's [increasing pension costs](#).

Another area where proactive planning is making a difference is in our energy management. The use of a third party electricity supplier working with both the City and School has saved approximately \$1.2 million in electricity costs over the past four fiscal years.

During the same period, we have also saved approximately \$1.6 million in the cost of natural gas by using a third party natural gas supplier. Electricity and gas savings combined were \$2.8 million! Unfortunately, electricity budgets will be increasing in Fiscal Year 2016 as the third party prices have increased.

Through streamline budgeting and strong financial management the city's tax rate has remained stable. Over the last seven years the average annual tax increase has been 2.17% which is quite remarkable given the losses in state revenues, volatile local revenues during the recession and significant increases in the cost of pensions.

Since my last State of the City, a new generation of development is sprouting up along [Amherst Street](#), injecting a new sense of vitality. Last summer, [Whole Foods Market opened up their first New Hampshire store at Turnpike Plaza to standing room only crowds.](#)

Other highlights include a new Service Credit Union branch; Chick-Fil-A's first free standing restaurant, a brand [new 118-room Residence Inn](#) with a [restaurant next door.](#) Momentum will continue this year with a new retail complex planned for 270 Amherst Street.

We're working closely with these businesses to ensure that growth doesn't overburden an already challenging corridor. We're collaborating to redesign the intersection at Amherst Street and Charron Avenue with hopes of constructing a solution for the long term in 2015.

Located just steps away, [The Rapid Group](#) has expanded to their third Nashua facility and now employs over 300 people. They continue to serve companies world-wide with quick turn metal prototypes from sheet metal, machined parts and cable assemblies. They are an outstanding example of what an investment from the city's [small business revolving loan fund](#) can do to help a business reach such great heights in less than 10 years!

Local entrepreneur and resident Jason Novak opened up a large new facility at 90 Northwestern Blvd. There, he is growing his company, [Fat Mongoose Technologies,](#) which provides engineering services in the fields of digital signal processing, communications and information services. [The rest of the facility was transformed into the Nashua Sports Academy, Nashua's newest indoor sports facility](#)

In [Downtown Nashua](#), we've made the key investments to ensure long lasting and sustainable growth in Downtown. I've mentioned the sidewalk project and the parking garage work; we also have made downtown parking easier and more convenient with new pay and display stations. This past year, [we completed a Downtown Circulation](#)

[Study](#), a blueprint of future changes to our traffic flow that will make Downtown safer, predictable and more walkable.

The business community is taking notice of our investments. While in recent months we have had to say goodbye to some longtime members of the Downtown community, exciting new businesses open up, while other mainstays find reason to expand.

In 2014, Agave Azul, Enterprise Bank, JaJa Belles Pastry and Coffee Shop provided dynamic new options for visitors to Downtown Nashua. Seven existing merchants either expanded or undertook a major renovation. [Fratello's Italian Grill, a long time fine dining staple in Manchester and Laconia just announced that they will open a new restaurant](#) where Villa Banca served our city for 18 delicious years! Local investors snapped up the Aubuchon Hardware building for \$1 million, just days after the store closed. The Main Street Methodist Church will launch a major project this year to connect their two buildings and create a public plaza. This year we'll see Charron Medical fill the former Coronis Cleaners building on Main Street and [CVS will break ground on their new Main Street pharmacy](#).

It's clear that many are thrilled with the long term prospects for the continued success of Downtown Nashua. Good things are happening.

Opportunities near [Exit 1](#) are sprouting before our eyes as developer John Flatley continues to build out a vision for a dynamic mixed-use community that attracts the best and brightest to live and work in Nashua. Gateway Hills is thriving.

The Nashua Technology Park continues to fill up with a mix of startups and world-renown technology firms. One of Nashua's daring tech entrepreneurs is at it again. Paula Long and John Joseph are growing their second tech super startup at the Tech Park with DataGravity. Seven years ago, they sold Equallogic to Dell for \$1.4 billion. DataGravity is growing quickly at the Tech Park—just two months ago they received another \$50 million in venture capital.

Many may notice the tireless pace of construction at the Tara Heights luxury apartment community as you drive northbound on the Everett Turnpike. Last year, they completed and fully-leased 180 units in the first phase of the project. The second phase is in various stages of construction and will bring another 350 luxury apartments to South Nashua. These units are attracting both Nashuan's and those looking to be a part of our [dynamic](#) tech scene.

Tara Commons, the 35,000 sq. ft. retail and medical office center opened up at the foot of Gateway Hills and brought exciting new concepts to Exit 1, making it easier for employees of the Tech Park and residents of Tara Heights to get a great cup of coffee at Pressed Café, visit their doctor or shop for a craft beer at the Craft Beer Cellar and relax after a long day in the Elizabeth Grady Salon owned by our own longtime resident and arts commissioner, Liz Raccioppi.

A new 120-unit, extended stay Hilton Homewood Suites is under construction and will open this summer.

The Flatley Company is also incentivizing tech companies. [Infinio, a data storage company located in Cambridge, Mass. will be expanding to the Tech Park practically free thanks to the Flatley Challenge.](#) Another team player, John Flatley's commitment to promote and grow employment in New Hampshire is having its desired effect here in Nashua as the unemployment rate in December dipped to 4.4%, well below the national average of 5.6%.

Nashua has a long and storied legacy as a city that launches and supports new ideas and businesses that have helped to change the world. Almost 200 years ago, Nashua was created by entrepreneurs who built a thriving textile town that was at the forefront of technological innovation.

Nashua's rebirth in the second half of the 20th Century was led by a new round of innovators that helped to build Nashua's reputation as a premier producer of electronics and machined goods. Over the last 20 years, Nashua firms have brought innovative ideas to market in the fields of computer software, electronics, robotics, alternative energy and medical devices.

Last year the City and Chamber launched '[Dare to Begin](#)' a new branding platform, that celebrates Nashua's spirit of innovation. It's the perfect time to spark this spirit of innovation with a new generation in Nashua. Working with our Economic Development Director, business and educational leaders we hope to launch, "Spark Tank" an exciting new business plan contest for high school aged students from Greater Nashua.

This year, student teams will compete for cash prizes and recognition by developing the best plan for an innovative new business idea. Spark Tank 2015 will spark unique ideas from Nashua's high school students and incentivize them to develop this idea into a plan for a business.

It is my hope that this will become an annual event to celebrate and promote the entrepreneurial spirit of Nashua and I welcome businesses to join us in inspiring and encouraging our future business leaders.

Nashua is home to dozens of great stories about high tech manufacturers growing jobs in the Nashua area by creating world leading products. Unfortunately, many of these companies are facing a shortage of [skilled workers](#) in STEM fields. Many of today's skilled workers will retire in the next 10 years. [At Nashua Community College, the new Advanced Manufacturing by Innovation and Design program is poised to train workers to fill some of these critical needs.](#)

I think that we need to do more.

By the end of the school year, I plan to introduce the Nashua Youth Summer Job program. The idea behind this is to provide our youth a window into industries that support and drive Nashua's economy. Early exposure to these industries could motivate our youth to make connections between what they are learning in the classroom with

real world career opportunities. This program will pay the students working for the 8 weeks of summer in these environments.

We are looking forward to implementing two recent grant awards. One is a \$500,000 Transportation Alternative Program grant for a new pedestrian/ bicycle bridge over the Nashua Canal, connecting the Heritage Rail Trail and Mine Falls Park in the heart of the City. And another, \$125,000 grant will help develop tools to continue our work making the city a walkable and bicycle friendly city. Thanks to Community Development Block Grants dollars and city funds new safer crosswalks are in the future for 2015 along Manchester and Concord Streets.

I want to thank our staff and local partners for their efforts in seeking out these grants and developing plans to improve the walkability and physical activities in Nashua.

That of course does not mean we don't have to be focused on getting our roads in better shape. Last year we established a trust fund for paving. We doubled the amount appropriated for street paving to \$2 million. The next priority is to get the proper software to update our road conditions so priorities and maintenance schedules can be determined based on safety and fairness.

We are also putting out to bid a group of our main roads. This will give us the information we need to make decisions based on the impact of those streets on the smaller ones that need attention. With significant funds now designated for this purpose we know this could be a better approach to both the short and long term.

The long awaited [Broad Street Parkway](#). With the recent opening of the new Baldwin St. Bridge, ongoing construction of the Fairmount St. Bridge, work in the [Millyard](#) and the new river crossing bridge the completion of the Broad Street Parkway is scheduled for completion this year!

Imagine.... 2015's holiday stroll....enter the downtown via the Broad Street Parkway, park in a well-lit parking garage, stroll down Main Street on safe sidewalks and enjoy the culmination of this community tradition by visiting Santa inside our beautifully renovated Hunt Memorial Building.

There is of course work to be done to ensure we stay on top of issues and things that could negatively impact the schedule. I would like to thank my executive management team, and project manager John Vancor. His constant attention to this project down to the smallest detail along with his solid advice is what will complete this project, the largest municipally managed project in New Hampshire's history.

When the Broad Street Parkway is completed at the end of the year, it will uncover the beauty of "lost" stretches of the Nashua River for the first time in decades. A new panorama will be unveiled as one approaches the new Nashua River Bridge where Nashua's historic past, bustling present and enhanced future will unfold before your eyes.

The Nashua River gave birth to our City, and powered its economic growth over its first 100 years. River-dependent industry helped to establish Nashua as a premier center for technological innovation. As industry moved away from our rivers in recent years, we have begun to reclaim our waterfronts as popular places to experience nature, rejuvenate one's body, mind and soul. People are drawn to our rivers.

Many of our major investments in recent years have a strong connection to the rivers. [The Apartments at Cotton Mill is now home to over 250 new residents of Downtown Nashua who enjoy spectacular views of the Nashua River.](#) [The expansion of the Riverwalk](#) now allows residents, employees and visitors to stroll around Downtown Nashua's waterfront, for the first time connecting venues such as the Nashua Senior Center and BAE's Canal Street campus to the east, through Downtown Nashua and all the way to the Nashua Millyard to the west.

[The installation of the adjustable crest gate on the Jackson Mills Dam now protects over 100 property owners from the impacts of flood events along the Nashua River.](#)

In the coming year, we're working to take steps to harness the power of the river to generate clean renewable energy that can help reduce our municipal energy costs. By the end of 2015, the City may be in a position to control both dams located on the Nashua River.

This past December, the [City took back ownership of the Jackson Mills Dam for the first time in 30 years.](#) The City is currently evaluating whether to activate an option to purchase the Mine Falls Dam, which it is eligible to secure at 50% of its original cost. Recent state legislation now allows for Group Net Metering, which would allow the City of Nashua to utilize this locally generated electricity in a new way. How remarkable would it be to capture the power of our own Nashua River for this purpose!

This way of thinking is what will expand our revenue and provide new options that do not negatively impact our taxpayers.

The Fiscal Year 16 budget will be mindful of the 1.5% spending cap.

We begin this budget with a \$3.6 million allowance with approximately \$3.8 million wage increases city wide, along with a [state pension increase of \\$1.9 million.](#) Certainly, most understand that all of our budgets have been reasonable and we have met a level of services our taxpayers expect. This year in spite of these challenges, we must do the same.

While there are cost items that we can control, and should, there are those over which we have no control; one of them being the [New Hampshire Retirement System employee pension costs.](#) The State has reduced its contributions since 2008 and as a consequence increased our employer rates. In 2012 the State reduced its Retirement System subsidy to zero. This reduction was on top of the System's unfunded liability problem creating an additional budgeting issue.

From Fiscal Year 2008 to Fiscal Year 2015 this cost has increased 124.6% and with the new rates for FY16 that percentage will become 146.7%! –an increase of \$12.6 million since Fiscal Year 2008.

That is why I have introduced for your consideration R-15-110

This resolution establishes an expendable trust fund for state employer pension costs and simultaneously appropriates \$2,730,000 (two million, seven hundred thirty thousand) into the fund. These funds come from the City's fund balance that has been assigned for this purpose. There is no impact on the unassigned fund balance which currently stands at \$27.4 million.

The intent of the legislation is to provide a mechanism to more effectively budget and pay for a portion of the state employer pension costs owed to the New Hampshire Retirement System (NHRS). As you know, the Retirement System changes its employer rates every two years which creates a challenge for municipalities who budget such pension expenses on an annual basis. This legislation will provide a funding mechanism to pay for pension costs in excess of yearly budgeted pension appropriation with an objective to smooth a portion of the impact of the biennial increases in the Retirement System employer rates.

As I look ahead at the coming year, I am so looking forward to completing and accomplishing some great projects. But I am also looking forward to getting the ball moving forward on things that won't get completed this year, or even next year, but nonetheless need to be addressed now for the next administration to pick up and carry the ball over the goal line. I am calling on each of you here in the chamber and those in the community-at-large to work with me, to commit to offering solutions and sharing experience and expertise for everyone's benefit in this "sport of good government."

While the feasibility study for the new [Exit 36 South](#) on Route 3 is complete and we are looking forward to make this project a reality, actions we take in the next year will make the difference for success. We will continue to work with our partners from the State of New Hampshire, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the regional planning commissions to maintain momentum. I look forward to working with the new leadership at the Department of Transportation from both New Hampshire and Massachusetts to put a plan into action. We will all benefit from its success with improved traffic flow along Spitbrook Road and the Daniel Webster Highway while creating a vital new option for a multi-modal transit center.

[The City received 100% funding from New Hampshire DOT to implement a 3.5 million dollar traffic solution where Bridge Street and East Hollis Street meet before the Taylor Falls Bridge going into Hudson.](#) This area is also a point where major sewer lines, water lines and drainage facilities meet. This underground infrastructure requires repair and replacement over the next ten years.

The City has hired STV to take a step back and study all of the complex infrastructure needs in this area so that the City is in a position to solve today's problems, understand tomorrow's needs. It will put the City in the best position to maximize future opportunities including the property at 25 Crown Street that we acquired to become home to a passenger rail station, when rail is extended to Nashua. In the meantime office space is available for rent. Additionally, we can have a new welcoming east gateway into our city.

The plans will be completed in 2015, but the development of this significant infrastructure project will need to stay on track through completion. Working closely with the BIDA, Nashua Regional Planning Commission, the Town of Hudson and the New Hampshire Department of Transportation we will surely succeed.

Governor Hassan joined me here in South Nashua two weeks ago to announce the release of the [New Hampshire Capitol Corridor Rail](#) and Transit Alternatives Analysis Final Report. The detailed study highlights the transformative affect that extending rail to New Hampshire, through Nashua, will have on the region.

With the strong support of the Governor, I am ever hopeful that within the next decade we *will* see passenger and enhanced freight rail service connecting Nashua to the world. We are laying the groundwork already, having secured one station site and working with our partners to identify another. When trains do arrive here, Nashua will be ready. I'll see you at the station!

In the interim, we are looking at how we might be able to provide transit service to the Lowell Train Station, which could really help gauge ridership.

Our Public Library is moving forward with plans to build the Chandler Memorial Wing which will incorporate meeting rooms of various sizes, renovate the computer training room, and feature artifacts from the Chandler Library. The Library Trustees continue to work hard to keep our library an important relevant resource in the 21st century.

I hope to be able to convince you to do the same for our Public Health and Community Services Division. [R-15-103 provides a great opportunity to make that happen at a prime location, at a reasonable cost](#). The price reduction and contribution from the Board of Health allows for a good deal for a key location. The next administration will be leaving a mark in this area. By acquiring this property now we can start the planning process.

Public Health and Community Development addresses many concerns in the city. The City's Health Department is spearheading regional efforts to prevent substance use amongst youth and young adults, while the Nashua Prevention Coalition engages partners from education, law enforcement, healthcare, and community leaders within the city. Keystone Hall is working to expand access to treatment and recovery support services to adults, while organizations like the Youth Council support high risk youth who may be struggling.

When taken together, these community responses are ensuring that our city remains steadfast in addressing the current opioid epidemic, through reducing these risky behaviors and increasing help available to those who are in need.

And the last thing I will mention is the information we are gathering and preparing for your review and decision making to change out our 5500 street lights to LED. I look forward to providing to you the cost analysis and projection when completed.

Speaking of bright lights...

As I reflect on the uniqueness of Nashua I cannot help but mention the Nashua arts community. Nashua is a [vibrant art community](#), from our one-of-a-kind [Annual International Sculpture Symposium](#), to our dedicated Nashua Arts Commission, to the award winning Peacock Players, to Symphony New Hampshire, to our City Hall Artists of the month sharing their work, and to all the other groups and individuals that uniquely add to the artistic fabric of Nashua.

There is no way I could list them all. I must take a moment to recognize the enormous dedicated [efforts of Fred and Jan Teeboom in building New Hampshire's only Holocaust Memorial in our Rotary Common](#). That dedication will stand out as one of the most moving in my tenure.

Understanding that by mentioning a few I know I have unintentionally omitted an obvious example of talent. I do know someone however that has devoted a lifetime to encouraging the arts community in Nashua. [She and her husband were recognized as the Greater Nashua Chamber of Commerce's Citizens of the Year in October!](#) Charles and Meri Goyette have certainly spent their lifetimes bringing life to the community, one literally, the other by enhancing what I call the soul of the community, art.

In spite of the strength and depth of our arts community, venues to support and attract performing arts productions and audiences are currently missing in Nashua's downtown. I want to thank Alderman McCarthy for officially getting the ball rolling for a [performing arts center](#). We had a great half day planning session with our community and I am encouraged by the interest and enthusiasm of the community.

[The Legacy playground is another example of community involvement.](#) Leadership Greater Nashua Class of 2012 brought citizens together and expressed their hopes and desires for their community to provide a universally accessible playground and offered their resources and solutions; "sharing their experience and expertise for everyone's benefit."

I know we agree that community members do not have to be elected to public office to initiate an idea or change. Their ideas are no less valid and should be met with careful attention and enthusiasm. Those of us in office need to be open and receptive to the desires of the community and willingly listen and work with them to achieve the greater good for the community. The work continues on this to raise the funds to make it a reality. I thank all of you for the time you have invested in this unique idea to make it the best it can be.

So far, 2015 has again brought some record breaking weather. Not that devastating weather events have not presented themselves in recent history. We can easily recall the 3 different 100 year floods that somehow lost track of time and all showed up within a few years of each other. There have been the wind storms, ice storms, hurricanes and snowstorms.

Additionally, sadly the world we now live in presents dangers and threats that two decades ago we would not have thought possible in our country. It is becoming more and more important to be aware of our surroundings and to be prepared for and informed during disasters.

Nashua is the only city in the state with a full time [Emergency Management Director. Justin Kates](#) has done a remarkable job establishing protocols, implementing emergency notification systems, training volunteers and coordinating inter-departmental emergency plans.

Justin is getting the community engaged and prepared. [CERT, the Citizen Emergency Response Team](#), is up and prepared! An additional 125 citizens were trained in 2014 and already another 45 during Martin Luther King weekend last month. The response team is currently 113 members strong.

Recent weather conditions are not something that generally get much attention in a State of the City address. However....I am compelled to mention it this evening. The last three weeks of winter have presented challenges that we have not experienced in decades. Both our equipment and personnel have been taxed beyond measure. We have a plan in place to address and improve the road conditions. Depending on what new weather we might face will determine how quickly we get back to normal. In the meantime, I call on our residents of Nashua to exercise patience, caution and good will.

Please be patient.....I assure you, the Department of Public Works and the Transit Department are working tirelessly to clear the 765 lane miles, 50 miles of sidewalks and parking lots. They cannot be in all places at all times. The staff that plow our streets also plow our sidewalks and 14 of our 17 schools, pick up your trash, fix our manhole covers and problem storm drains just to name a few.

Please be cautious.... It is still dangerous in many areas. High snowbanks, shrinking travel lanes, limited parking, and slippery walkways. It is critical that everyone, drivers and pedestrians, take every precaution to be safe and keep others safe.

Please be neighborly...If you have a shovel or a snow blower or a plow and are able, help out your neighbor. We have many elderly or disabled in our community that didn't plan for a winter like this and may find themselves in need of a helping hand. If your hands can help, please do.

I think we can all take a lesson from Bill Stashluk featured on the front page of the Nashua Telegraph today. Bill may think he's crazy, but I call his good natured

helpfulness critical. If everyone does what they can for their neighbors we will get through this much easier.

The Division of Public Works is responsible for oversight of critical infrastructure and services. Overseeing the day to day operations, which this year includes the week to week snowstorms. Director Lisa Fauteux and her staff have gone above and beyond by overseeing major infrastructure projects. I have already mentioned the Broad Street Parkway and the downtown sidewalks. These two projects alone, occurring simultaneously, include major components such as three bridges on the parkway and major underground infrastructure rebuilding of the sidewalks.

With the recent unprecedented amount of snow they have risen to the call and done a remarkable job under remarkable circumstances. From concrete to crosswalks; masonry to mast arms; signals to sidewalks; sewers to soccer fields; plows to playgrounds; pools to potholes; trash to tennis courts; and scorching middle of the day paving to freezing all night plowing, they do an outstanding job and I would like to recognize and thank them for all they do. Many of you have taken the time to extend your appreciation to them, I know you join me and the Board of Public Works in letting them know we are quite proud of them!

Their work has an impact on every person in this city. The day to day operations would be more efficient and effective if we were able to consolidate the Division. Work still needs to be done to get that information into a format that will help you in this future decision.

While I am mentioning division directors I want to welcome our new Director of Community Development, Sarah Marchant. Sarah most recently worked in Amherst, New Hampshire as the Community Development Director and Zoning Administrator. She is serving her fourth year as president of the New Hampshire Planners Association. Sarah is doing a wonderful job of managing critical areas of concern for our citizens, both in the areas of safety and planning.

Speaking of safety, our newly appointed Chief of Police Andrew Lavoie has taken the reins at the police department after being sworn in 28 years ago, yesterday, as a Nashua police officer.

I am confident that his work and that of his staff will maintain our recognition as a safe city. Chief Lavoie and I have been...and plan to continue meeting on a regular basis to coordinate efforts here in Nashua. I want to thank him and the Police Commission for their support and cooperation.

Our City Clerk Paul Bergeron is finishing his tenure with the city in July of this year. I know you join me in thanking him for 15 years of service to our city. A quick look will tell you that he has overseen 4 presidential elections, 4 mayoral elections, 8 state and 8 local elections, not to mention primaries and special elections! He is a dedicated professional, and has run his office highly focused on great customer service. He is held in high regard throughout our state and even nation as he sits on national boards. His

knowledge of record keeping, historic documents and the like are unsurpassed. He will be missed.

While the city has renovated the [Hunt Memorial Building at the north end of Main St., Rivier University's combined campus project at the south end of Main St. is remarkable.](#) Rivier is Nashua's oldest institute of higher learning. They see Nashua as their home and the world as their classroom. They are dedicated to "transforming hearts and minds to serve the world" and the new work on their campus is transforming South Main St. We are so glad they call Nashua home!

We certainly have no shortage of those that call Nashua home that stand out here in our community. I was more than honored and humbled to be invited and to attend a Medal of Honor ceremony at the White House in July. Staff Sergeant Ryan Pitts was awarded this honor for his "conspicuous gallantry" displayed at the Battle of Wanat in Afghanistan's Kunar Province on July 13, 2008. Ryan does not accept the title of hero, instead he applies that to his fellow soldiers.

July 13, 2008 was a Sunday. I can't say for certain what I was doing that day. I suspect I was enjoying a peaceful summer day with my family, much like most of you and the rest of this nation was doing. Let it never escape us that our freedoms and liberties are not free, but purchased with the bravery and sadly the lives of those meeting evil on other shores to prevent it from coming to ours.

As I mentioned in my opening, this address gives me pause as I look back and consider achievements, possibilities, and the very special people I have the honor of knowing and working with. There is one such person I must honor this evening; the late James McNamee, Corporation Counsel, trusted advisor and dear friend.

I could always count on Jamie to tell me what he truly thought and what I needed to know, not what I wanted to hear. Jamie worked with me and guided me through the toughest and highest stake negotiations of my administration. He joined me in the sport of good government. He always looked at both, and sometimes more than just two, sides of an issue. He was never afraid to fully vet others' points of view, consider their validity and work toward solutions and compromises that served the greater good. Jamie loved life, he loved his family and he loved this city.

Another dear friend of mine is fond of saying, "Governing, not grandstanding." It should never be about who gets the glory or making political points, it's about doing what's in the best interest of the people of Nashua, even when it is hard or unpopular.

When history looks back on what we have accomplished I do not ask it to credit my administration. When history looks back on our accomplishments I want it to credit the many people that took part in the sport of good government during my administration. I want it to recognize everyone that played a role; that was willing to listen to others' points of view; that looked at what was in the best interest of this city and their fellow citizen; and who didn't think there wasn't enough time for them to make a difference.

As the New England Patriots proved just two weeks ago, even when there is little time on the clock, fantastic things can be accomplished. My theme when I ran for mayor was "Imagine the Possibilities." We have shared many wonderful achievements, some that may have seemed impossible.

My plan is not to run out the clock, but to work toward completing current projects, achieve goals we have already set, and ensure that this city continues to move forward and is in the best shape possible for the next administration.

Indeed, there are endless possibilities and now is always the time to make a difference. I look forward to working with each of you and members of our exceptional community to continue to move Nashua forward and achieve the possibilities we've been working toward together!

Together we have made history; together we have kept Nashua strong and vibrant through the most challenging times, together we have been part of something so much bigger than us.

Thank you for your kind attention tonight.